

The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY
THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

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THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

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CONTENTS OF NO. 10.

LUTHER'S EASTER HYMN	121
EASTER	121
THE STILL HOUR	123
THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB	124
THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL: A VISIT FROM JOHNNY	125
NATURAL HISTORY: MACK, THE PARROT, VII; A LES- SON IN HUMANITY.	127
WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT SHAKESPEARE, IV.	128
THE HOUSEHOLD	129
LETTERS OF A SISTER	129
THE AMUSEMENT COLUMN	130
IMPORTANT NOTICES	132

LUTHER'S EASTER HYMN.

In the bonds of Death He lay
Who for our offence was slain;
But the Lord is risen to-day,
Christ hath brought us life again.
Wherefore let us all rejoice,
Singing loud with cheerful voice,
Hallelujah!

Jesus Christ, God's only Son,
Came at last our foe to smite,
All our sins away hath done,
Done away Death's power and might.
Only the form of Death is left,
Of his sting he is bereft,
Hallelujah!

That was a wondrous war, I trow,
When Life and Death together fought,
But Life hath triumphed o'er his foe,
Death is mocked and set at naught.
'Tis even as the Scripture saith,
Christ through death has conquered Death;
Hallelujah!

Let us keep high festival
On this most blessed day of days,
When God His mercy showed to all;
Our Sun is risen with brightest rays,
And our dark hearts rejoice to see
Sin and night before Him flee.
Hallelujah!

To the supper of the Lord,
Gladly will we come to-day;
The word of peace is now restored,
The old leaven is put away.
Christ will be our food alone,
Faith no life but His doth own.
Hallelujah!

EASTER.

"Because I live, ye shall live also."—JOHN xiv. 19.

The sects in the Church might be judged
by a comparison of their favorite holidays.
And so might eras in history be judged.
It is matter of real interest, then, to see
how all poets and prophets of all divisions
of the Church unite on this day, to proclaim
it the Sunday of Sundays, the High Holy
Day of the year. For this is to say that
poet and prophet, of every sect and those
least sectarian, have found out at last that
the Christian religion stands for life. Life
instead of Form, Life instead of Laws,
Life instead of Grave-clothes, Life instead
of Tombs, Life instead of Death,—that
is what Christianity means, and what it
is for. You would be tempted to say that
the Saviour had already enforced this
completely in what he *said* to men, tempted
to say that Easter morning was not needed
either for illustration or enforcement. Cer-
tainly the gospel texts are full of the lesson.
"Because I live, ye shall live also." "As
the Father hath life in himself, so hath he
given to the Son to have life in himself."
"This is Life Eternal: to believe on thee."
And central text of all, the text we have
chosen for the motto of this church, "I
have come that they might have life, and
that they might have it more abundantly."
If texts alone ever did anything, these and
a thousand more would show what the
Truth is, and the Way. But one is tempted,
in bitter moods, to say that texts never
do anything, that words never achieve or
finish anything. One is tempted to re-
member how he said that any man who
prepared God's way is greater than any
man who only proclaims it; how prophets
and prophesying were done with; mere

talk was over—praise the Lord! and energy, action, force had come in instead, praise the Lord!

What *does* he propose? Life! That those who are dead shall live; that people shall pray for themselves who have been praying by proxy; that people shall pray where they are, who have been going to Jerusalem to worship; that people shall do themselves what they have been expecting others to do; that people shall enter heaven now, which they have been supposing should wait for them after ages of æons. God is yours, heaven is yours, if you would only live. Why, if you had as much life in you as this grain of mustard-seed has, you would share God's own power and live in God's own heaven! For God is here, and God is now. The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Life! That is what he proposes.

These words, even dimly echoed, shake the ages. If words alone were worth much, you would say that they must have touched to the heart the men who heard them, the women and the children. I do not say but, in a fashion, they did touch them. But what appeared on the surface was that, when he said some such words, this group of his hearers would say, "Can't you show us a miracle, as you showed the people of Nain?" And that set of people would say, "Can't you feed us here on the grass as you fed us last week by the lake-side?" And these near friends would say, "Cannot you make me Senator and cannot you make me a Publican, when you come into your kingdom and have offices to fill?" "*Life!*" Yes, that sounds all very well in sermons, and when one is making a platform speech, but, as between friends, other things are to be considered," so that, so far as appears, the applause of the multitudes, and the crowded streets of Capernaum, of Tiberias, and of Jericho, never advanced the real kingdom by the breadth of one hair.

There were mere sentimentalists, who were so passionately in love with him, that they must be always kissing the hem of his garment or sitting in his shadow. They were worthless when he was out of sight: they were useless when he sent them on an errand. If he said firmly, "I must go away," they were not simply in tears, they were prostrate and wretched; and, when he went away, in truth, it proved, that they had not found out what the word "*life*" means. That type of people exists in the Church to this hour.

In the midst of all this folly Jesus moved as simply and as omnipotently as Orion moves across a winter sky, careless of cloud,

careless of smoke or dust, careless of whirlwinds. If people see him, well; if they do not see him,—no matter, he is the same. Let them take or make this lesson or that lesson, he is the same. Life and Eternal Life—that is what he stands for. God with man. The Eternal Life of the unchanging God in the human form and in the midst of earth's surroundings!

Yes, my friends, and so we ask naturally, "Do we see him?" But even that is of no consequence, he tells us, in comparison with this. "Are we alive?" Nay, that question itself deceives us. Are we even sure that we know what the word "*life*" means? There is a description, somewhere, of the new emotion, the new senses, the new joy, the wild, strange surprise, with which an imaginative man, new-made, saw sunrise and its glories, drank in the freshness of the morning and the luxury of day for the first time, ready to sing as Adam sang, "These are thy glorious gifts, Father of all."

"How could it be for the first time?" says some Nicodemus. It *was* for the first time, because in the reckless habits of those days in Kentucky, where this man lived, he could not remember till now the night when he had not gone to sleep the worse for liquor, so that he could not remember till now the morning when he had waked fresh and pure and able to enjoy; not till now, when some apostle of the Word of God had made him fling off that old bondage and enabled him in that one detail of life, to see and feel and hear and understand. Now that man, till that miracle was wrought, did not know what the word "*morning*" meant. His definition of it was inadequate. If he had talked with a true artist about it, or a simple child, or a pure woman, he would not have known what the words meant which they used. And that fatuity and ignorance is only a little type of illustration, in a single detail, of our inability from ignorance to use the word "*life*" at all, in the sense in which Jesus used it, until and unless we have boldly entered into Life, as he said to the young man of Edom.

That is what God says to us by every voice of his. It is what he says this day, of all days, by his son, "Well Belovèd." The resurrection miracle is nothing to you and me, if it is only an event of eighteen centuries by-gone. Unless we can live the Immortal Life, unless we can receive God in his own home, in these hearts of ours, the texts are nothing to us unless these daily lives illustrate them. Parable is nothing unless the Good Samaritan bends

in these streets over the bleeding traveller, unless in your home the tender father can receive the returning prodigal. For all that wealth of miracle, of precept and example was never lived out, merely that we might have one more frieze of old-time ornament to be sculptured on the upper walls of our temples. Miracle was wrought, parable invented, sermon preached, yes, and the cross was borne, that this world might be lifted from the grovelling existence of brutes to the nobler life of men; that you and I, that all men everywhere, might truly live! And the festival of to-day, if it is anything but an inexplicable curiosity of history, means that you and I are pledged anew to-day; that we will live the life of the living children of a living God.

This pledge means for a church,—that is, for an organization of Christian men and women,—that it will do what God has for it to do, in the place where he has planted it. To say it would do what Christ would have done is only an effort to make the other statement more real. It is his representative. It claims to be God's own beloved child. This church, because its Easter festival is real, undertakes this day in the echoes of its music and before its flowers have withered, to comfort those that mourn, to heal those that are broken-hearted, to open the eyes that are blind, and to speak God's love to those who have not heard it; to proclaim glad tidings, indeed, to the poor.

And each child of God here, immortal, never dying, begins a new life to-day. It is to be a life which enjoys every blessing of God's love.

It is to be a life which trusts in his infinite power.

It is to be a life which spends and is spent in the service of Truth, Holiness, and Love.

It is to be a life in which each man lives for each other man, because each man lives for the purpose of the Living God.

It is a life, therefore, which with every new day is new born. From every night's sleep it starts as from an Easter sepulchre. With every new day's opportunities it steps forward as serene and cheerful as an archangel to his mission. Why worry one's self about the past, about a tomb? Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here. He is risen!—*Edward E. Hale.*

The letter fails, and systems fall,
And every symbol wanes;
The Spirit over-brooding all
Eternal love remains.

THE STILL HOUR.

THE DAY BETWEEN.

I like to think when Calvary's sun
Went down in cloud and storm and rack,
And velvet shadows, one by one,
Blurred out that gibbet looming black,
Only one day must pass away,
Only one day must intervene,
Till aching eyes beheld Him rise;
But oh, that day—the day between!

And did the dawn that Deathless Day
Like loveliest lily slow unfold,
Until the sundrifts broke like spray,
And all the world was rose and gold?
When, silver clear, on list'ning ear,
Of those who gazed where He had been,
An angel voice bade hearts rejoice,—
But oh, the day—that day between!

And so I know when there shall be
That hour, beloved, you must take
Your cross, and bear it patiently,
Up Calvary Hill, for love's own sake,—
Blossoming born, your Easter morn
Will follow soon, sublime, serene,—
But this we pray, dear God, to-day,
Grace for the day that lies between!

—*Kate M. Cleary.*

"Blessed are the dead." It is no hard task, when once our life has been touched with the life of our religion and has had its conversation in heaven, to behold it translated and transfigured. Whether they who lived it passed beyond our sight with the dew of youth fresh upon them, or in the fulness of earthly years, preparing to live, or, as we say, prepared to die, the world all untasted and untried, or already largely theirs through much study of its works and ways, goodness and beauty a promise and prophecy for time, or the earnest of the heavenly inheritance, their Lord the Father who giveth, or the Father who taketh away, they walk before us in the same air of glory, matron and maid, and young and old. To all it has been the same clear and beauteous death, the same jewel of the just, and it lights up the places which, it might have seemed, their going away could only make dark. "Blessed are the dead," for the ministry of grace into which they have been raised, for their power to make real to us that life which is so often hidden or shadowy, to separate that righteousness which is immortal—a glorious kingdom and a beautiful crown—from all vain shows, to change

the very house of mourning into a house of gladness, if not of feasting, because of the light in which they draw near to us, and the comfort with which they comfort us! They rest from their labors, but only as he rests who worketh hitherto, and in ways past our finding out. Their works, which are no longer labors and no longer weighted with mortal care and sorrow, do follow them.—*Rufus Ellis.*

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[Send all offers and requests for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 80 Goffe Street, Quincy, Mass.]

Please remember, when you see a request for a book in the Book Club, to write a card to Mrs. Nichols, asking "Shall I send such a book to such a person?" before sending it, else the person who requests it may receive several copies. When any one writes directly to you, asking for a book offered by you, send a card to Mrs. Nichols, saying that you have sent it. When you receive more requests than you can meet, send these to the Book Club to be printed there.

OFFERS.

Will any one who would like to receive "Black Beauty," address Miss Langmaid, 237 Berkeley Street, Boston, Mass.?

The Lexington Branch offers the following books. Address either Miss E. E. Harrington, Mrs. M. E. Bennett, Mrs. George O. Davis.

Miscellaneous.

"Memorial Address on Life and Character of George F. Hoar"; "Diary and Correspondence of Amos Lawrence"; "Man Limitless," Wilson; "History of Pendennis," 2 vols.; "Schiller's Poems"; "Drift-weed," Celia Thaxter; "Pearls of Shakspeare"; "Sun Prints in Sky Tints"; "The Birds' Calendar"; "About Grant," J. L. Swift; "From the Earth to the Moon," Jules Verne; "Glances and Glimpses," Harriot K. Hunt, M.D.; "Summer Rest," Gail Hamilton; "The Last of the Mohicans," Cooper; "Little Brother and Other Stories," Ludla; "Letters of a Self-made Merchant to his Son," Lorimer; "A Rose of Normandy"; "In Search of the Unknown," Chambers; "Rip Van Winkle"; "The Under Dog," Hopkinson Smith; "Fair Maid of Perth," Scott; "Prisoner of Zenda," Anthony Hope; "George's Mother," Stephen Crane; "Cyrano de Bergerac," Rostand.

Juvenile.

"French Fairy Tales"; "The Girls and I," Mrs. Molesworth; "Fun for the Family"; "The Jimmyjohns"; "Nellie's New Home,"

Mrs. Butts; "Five Little Peppers," Margaret Sidney; "Out-door Sports for Boys."

Educational.

Morse's "Third Reader"; "Language Lessons"; "History of Greece," Timayenis; "History of Rome," Steele; "Vocal and Physical Training"; "Practical French Instructor"; Anderson's "United States Reader"; "Grammar Land."

Miss L. Freeman Clarke, 91 Mt. Vernon Street, Boston, Mass., offers *The American Antiquarian and Oriental Journal* for two years, 1906-07. (Preference given to a minister.)

REQUESTS.

Those who write to us for the first time must send the name and address of a minister as a reference. Without that the request will not be printed.

1. I would greatly appreciate any good reading,—magazines, either current numbers or old ones, also any of the newer books, those issued within the last seven or eight years. I have two children, aged eleven and fourteen. Any reading suitable for them would also be very acceptable. Mrs. C. E. Morrison, Erie, Colorado.

2. Job Triplett, Hendrix, North Carolina, asks for books or papers suitable for an eleven-year-old boy.

3. Mrs. Mae Loughmiller, Tom Bean, Texas, asks for books that would be helpful in kindergarten.

4. Mrs. P. L. Miner writes: "We have changed our home to Avarad, Oklahoma, still on the railroad, and will be thankful for reading matter. The men read everything they can get. Any good reading will be welcome."

5. Please send me some books to read. I will be thankful for any kind of good books. My only little baby has just died, and I feel so lonely and bad. Mrs. Martha Love, Polkton, North Carolina.

6. Mrs. John Grigg, Howe, Grayson County, Texas, will be thankful for good reading matter.

7. Mrs. Hattie D. Wood, Howe, Texas, asks for reading for herself and also asks that some be sent her aunt, Mrs. J. H.

Hatcher, same address, who is almost an invalid confined to the house.

8. Mrs. Edna Dunbar, Terrall, Oklahoma, will be glad of any good reading.

9. As I am a great lover of reading, and don't get much to read, I would appreciate it very much if you would send me some magazines or love stories. Claude Hurt, Steubenville, Kentucky.

10. Current numbers of *Ladies' Home Journal* or *Youth's Companion* are asked for by Mrs. Mary L. Brown, Critz, Patrick County, Virginia.

11. The *Modern Priscilla* and a magazine giving instruction in cultivation of flowers are asked for by Mrs. M. L. Daniel, Farmville, Virginia.

12. I am very anxious to get the "World Beautiful," by Lilian Whiting. I will safely return it to any one kind enough to send it to me. Mrs. Bertha A. Wentworth, Stark, New Hampshire.

13. I am very anxious to become a member of the Cheerful Letter Society. I am a member of a very large family, having two sisters and six brothers, and would be glad to get any good books and literature, or anything that will help to make our home more cheerful. Bessie Tuck, Bumpass, Virginia. R. F. D. No. 1.

14. Mrs. J. Porter, Doerun, Colquitt County, Georgia, asks for *Modern Priscilla* or anything on fancy work.

15. Gracie Brown, a small girl of Verano, Virginia, asks for a scrap-book of pictures.

16. Mrs. M. C. Andrews, Shannon, Texas, will be glad of reading for herself and picture-books for her two little children.

17. Mrs. J. L. Pleasants, Pedlar Mills, Virginia, would very much like to receive the first volume of "Sights and Insights," as she received the second volume only.

18. Mrs. J. L. Godfrey, 837 North Fremont Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland, an invalid, confined to her wheel chair, is anxious to obtain *Atlantic Monthly*, June, July, August, and September numbers for 1907.

19. Mrs. S. A. Pace, Lancaster, Texas, Route 2, would like reading for herself,

and some little story book suitable for two children, ages seven and eight years.

20. Mrs. J. C. Austin, Olive Branch, North Carolina, will be glad of magazines. R. F. D. No. 1.

21. Mrs. Sulie Tadlock, Illinois Bend, Texas, formerly at Rock, Indian Territory, will be glad of any good reading.

22. Mary C. Reams, Clarkton, Virginia, asks for a first reader.

23. I am a farmer's little girl, twelve years old. Live in a remote place and so far from school, I can't go in bad weather. I have only been to school six weeks this winter, and now the school is most out. Will some one send me suitable reading for myself? Will some one send me the *Cheerful Letter*, after reading it? Your little friend, Louvie M. Brown, Sandy Ridge, North Carolina.

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

A VISIT FROM JOHNNY.

It must not be supposed from Mary Osborne's indulgence in respect to the faults of her scholars' compositions, and from her general dislike to fault-finding, that she made it a principle *never* to reprove children, who were under her care, for wrong-doing. The cases in which she thought fault-finding injudicious and injurious were those in which the faults and errors were the results of ignorance or inexperience, and not of a wilful intention to do wrong. When a child who was under her charge in any way was guilty of doing deliberately what he knew or might know was wrong, she then had no objection at all to finding fault with him. On the contrary, she thought that in such cases the best thing to be done was for her to come up and face the wrong-doing in a very distinct and decided manner—not, indeed, with angry words and scolding, but kindly and gently, and yet in such a way as to meet the difficulty squarely and bring it to a distinct and positive issue.

The very next week after Mary Osborne had been so indulgent with Johnny about the faults and mistakes in his composition, she had occasion to be very strict and decided with him in a case of disobedience, which was a fault of a very different character. The case was this:—

The garden pertaining to Mr. Osborne's house extended back some distance, and there was a certain place where it joined

Mrs. Allen's garden, there being only a fence between. Near this place, on Mr. Osborne's side, was a little summer house with a plat of green grass before it, and some walks and borders of flowers at the sides.

Mary Osborne used often to take her book and her work and come out to this summer house, and one afternoon, while she was sitting there, she heard Johnny's voice on the other side of the fence. He was playing in his mother's garden.

For a time Mary Osborne took no notice of Johnny at his play, and he did not even know that she was near. But after a while, having finished her reading, and being about to take up her work, she said to herself:—

"Now perhaps Johnny would like to come over on this side and play about here, where he can have my company a little."

Accordingly she went to the fence and, calling to Johnny, proposed that he should come over on her side and play. Johnny was delighted with this invitation, and immediately climbed over the fence, bringing his cart and his whip with him.

He played about upon the grass plat and upon the walks for some time, Mary Osborne, as he considered it, playing with him. The only way, however, in which she played with him was in aiding his imagination by suggesting ideas and fancies to his mind. She made believe that he was a teamster, whom she was employing to haul goods, and gave him the name of Mr. Whippetree, and sent him for loads of different kinds of merchandise and produce. Now it was loaf sugar, in lumps, represented by white pebble stones. Again it was brown sugar, represented by sand, and in a third case hay, which Johnny gathered by pulling the grass, and then bound upon his cart by means of a string, which Mary Osborne helped him to make, by doubling and twisting some of her cotton thread.

While Johnny was amusing himself in this way, his mother happened to come out into the garden to gather some lettuce for the purpose of making a salad for dinner; and, hearing Johnny's voice on the other side of the fence, she came and looked over, to see what he was doing.

"Ah, Johnny!" said Mrs. Allen. "Here you are! I could not imagine what had become of you. I'm afraid you are troublesome to Miss Osborne."

"Oh, no," said Mary. "He is not troublesome at all. On the contrary, he helps to amuse me while I am sitting here at my work. We are having a nice time together."

"But, Johnny," said Mrs. Allen, "you

must not strike about so with your whip. You will break down some of Miss Osborne's flowers. Indeed you ought not have your whip at all in Miss Osborne's garden. Bring it to me."

"No," said Johnny, "I want to keep it."

"Johnny," said Mary Osborne, "you must obey your mother. Carry her the whip."

The reason why Mary Osborne gave Johnny this command was not because she was unwilling that he should keep the whip, nor because she feared for her flowers, for Johnny was really very careful not to strike the flowers, and there was consequently little danger of his doing any harm. But she thought that children ought always to obey their mothers; and, as Johnny had received a command from his mother, everything else was to remain in suspense until the command was obeyed.

Her plan was that, as soon as this had been done,—that is, as soon as Johnny had given up the whip,—she would herself ask his mother to restore it to him, telling her at the same time that he was careful not to do any harm with it, and she had no objection at all to his keeping it. Then his mother would have given it back to him, and he could have gone on with his play as before.

If Mary Osborne had simply told him of her plan,—that is, if she had said, "You must obey your mother, Johnny, and carry her the whip, like a good boy; but, when you have done it, I will ask her immediately to give it back to you again, for I don't think you will do any harm with it,"—it is probable that he would have obeyed.

But Mary Osborne would not do this. She knew very well that there was no more effectual way of undermining and destroying everything like *authority* over the mind of a child than by accompanying commands with reasonings, promises, and persuasions. Children must be trained to obey commands as *commands* upon the simple principle of *submission to authority*, and she knew that this principle of submission was always greatly weakened, and in the end entirely destroyed, by attempting to eke it out with coaxings, promises, or bribes.

In accordance with these views, she abstained purposely from saying anything to Johnny about her intention of having the whip restored to him immediately after he should have surrendered it, and said simply,—

"You must obey your mother, Johnny: carry her the whip."

Johnny did not feel quite so much at his

ease in disobeying Mary Osborne as he did in disobeying his mother. Still he was not willing to give up his whip even at her command. He, however, stopped his whipping, hung his head, and said in a low voice,—

"No, I want to keep my whip."

"Well, at any rate," said Mrs. Allen, "you must not whip Miss Osborne's flowers. I am afraid he will do some damage, Miss Osborne."

"He ought to obey you," said Mary Osborne, "when you tell him to bring you the whip, but I don't think he will do any damage to the flowers, for he is very careful."

"Oh, well, if he is careful," said Mrs. Allen, "he may keep the whip. I was afraid he might do some damage with it."

So saying, she turned and went away.—
Mary Osborne, by Jacob Abbott.

(To be continued.)

NATURAL HISTORY.

MACK, THE PARROT.

VII.

When I come into Mack's presence I usually have some little compliment for him, which he often receives with a fine flourish of his wings, and sometimes with a peculiar curve of his neck and back,—a sort of society bow, as he understands it. One morning he had been alone for several hours when I happened along with one of my compliments, when, to my surprise, he simply said:—

"I like it. Sometimes I don't care."
Which was truth itself.

One of our family, being a devoted church member, has frequent visitors who talk chiefly of church affairs. A new minister was under discussion, and the word "settled" was constantly used. Mack became accustomed to the word; and, after a visitor had given her opinion and said good-bye, Mack exclaimed, "Am I settled?"

One person, weary of his constant demands for attention, said, "Mack, you're a fuss-budget!"

"A budget-fuss?" asked Mack, with curiosity.

We were wondering about some little household mystery, when one of us asked, "I wonder *why* it is so?"

The other replied, "I think that *I* know *why*," when Mack inquired, "What's *why*?"

In the winter Mack has periods of saying little, being chiefly occupied in trying to keep warm, and in making remarks about the weather. After two or three days of

waiting for some intelligible words from him, I said:—

"Mack, I wish you would say something worth publishing in the *Cheerful Letter*." An hour or two afterwards, as he surveyed the dinner-table and saw none of his favorite dishes, he looked me squarely in the face and asked, with the utmost seriousness, "Do you like pork?"

When liver is served without bacon he considers it a personal affront, and will have none of it. We do not like to give him as much bacon as he wishes to eat, yet we know that all birds staying in our climate through the winter must have their fill of suet and other fats, in order to sustain life. English bacon is Mack's one weakness. And this reminds me that, in sight of our kitchen windows, hung from a clothes line, is a grape-basket, into which go all sorts of waste fat for the good of the birds who need it. The basket is the swinging pantry of numerous chickadees, while the gray squirrels sit on neighboring fences and trees and wish that they could reach the basket by a tight-rope performance. They seem to fly from one tree to another, but the clothes-line is an impassable bridge.

Yesterday a handsome gray cat was attracted by the chickadees that alight upon a window-sill near the basket to gather the crumbs laid out for them. Puss gave a long jump from the ground, hitting the window-pane with such a noise that Mack was much startled. His wings flapped wildly, and I went from an adjoining room to quiet him. There sat Mack and the cat within a few inches of each other, showing no enmity, no fear. Later, I asked Mack, "Did the cat frighten you?"

"That's all right," was his calm reply, and I have no doubt that he is anticipating another visit from Puss.—*Helen M. Knowlton.*

A LESSON IN HUMANITY.

For many years bluebirds had been rarely seen in Massachusetts. Then we heard they were in the grounds of an adjacent estate. Immediately we fastened sections of bamboo in our trees, hoping to entice the bluebirds to build in them. In a very few days we heard their low, sweet warble, and looked out to see a pair of birds of the most heavenly blue perched upon a limb near one of the pieces of bamboo. Shortly we saw the birds busily flying in and out of the bamboo, with bits of dried grass. After the building was completed, however, they were so seldom in evidence we feared they

had deserted their home, so one day, to quiet our fear, we climbed a step-ladder and looked in; and, to our great joy, we found five little greenish-blue eggs.

In early March of the following spring, as the pieces of bamboo had become filled with nests of the gypsy moths, we removed them and erected a two-apartment bird-house. The bluebirds delighted us by returning and taking possession of their new home. Later another pair came to occupy the second tenement.

The next season, as early as February, English sparrows moved into both apartments, so that, when the bluebirds again returned, they found their home crowded with noisy tenants. They perched about in overhanging branches, warbling, as it seemed to our ears, more plaintively than ever, and wistfully watching the sparrows flitting in and out of their old home.

One morning, very soon after, I heard a terrible commotion among the birds, and, just as I looked up to learn the cause, a flock of screaming sparrows flew away, savagely pursued by a pair of bluebirds. It was certainly astonishing that two gentle bluebirds could rout an army of noisy, quarrelsome sparrows. These made several attempts to return, but the vigilant bluebirds never failed to drive them away.

We watched the bird house as closely as our daily occupations would permit, and saw the bluebirds busily and swiftly fly to and from the house, and often perch in the entrance with heads thrust down within, going through the motions of feeding young birds; but, as they had so recently taken possession, we considered this idea incredible, and supposed they were only taking away the old nests and bringing material for new.

Imagine our great surprise when, after a brief period, we saw unfledged sparrows issuing from the openings and resting on the platform below. The conquered birds in their flight had left eggs or newly hatched young, and the victors had been tenderly rearing them. Nor was the task quite ended; for the rapidly growing fledglings stood about with open mouths, constantly clamoring for food, and their foster parents were kept ever on the wing, seeking and bringing supplies. Our interest in the strange household deepened as we saw the English sparrows begin to hover about. Occasionally one would dash in and thrust something down an uplifted gaping throat, and the bluebirds did not molest the intruder. The sparrows became more and more attentive to the young birds, and still the bluebirds appeared unconcerned; and,

before we had quite realized what was taking place, the young sparrows flew away with their kindred, and the bluebirds remained in possession of their home and set about rearing their own broods.—*Cora E. Pease.*

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT SHAKESPEARE.

IV.

The earliest dramatic effort of the great poet is by general consent believed to be "Love's Labour Lost," and the date of that play is about 1591. His last play, "The Tempest," appeared about 1610. It was during this period (1591-1610) that the matchless series of dramas appeared. After that date there is no play which can be altogether assigned to Shakespeare, though he may have contributed to other plays, such as "Henry VIII.," which was being acted on June 29, 1613, when the Globe Theatre was burned down. It was usual, as Mr. Sidney Lee has pointed out, for the manager to invite revision of a play at the hands of others than its author before it was produced on the stage. "Shakespeare gained his earliest experience as a dramatist by revising or rewriting behind the scenes. Many plays were thus treated, and Shakespeare's handiwork has been recognized in them."

The merits of Shakespeare as an actor have never been fully set forth. That he was a good actor is no doubt. We know some of the characters sustained by him, both in his own plays and in those of Ben Jonson. Pleasant, gossiping Aubury tells that "Shakespeare did act exceedingly well," and an old stage tradition speaks of him as the original Mercutio in "Romeo and Juliet." According to an actor-manager, than whom there is no one now living better versed in the acting of Shakespeare plays, the poet must have thoroughly understood the business of the stage, since there is not an impossible or awkward entrance or exit in any of the plays he wrote.

As a poet, Shakespeare first came before the public in 1593, with a metrical rendering of the classic story of "Venus and Adonis." Although the author's name does not appear upon the title-page, his name in full is appended to the letter of dedication to the Earl of Southampton. This was followed by a more temperate poem, "Lucrece," in 1594, also dedicated to his friend and patron Southampton. The most beautiful, strangest, and sweetest of all Shakespeare's poems, "The Sonnets," were not

published till 1609, when they appeared surreptitiously. The greatest part of this collection appears to have been written in 1594, not for the public, but for private friends. The mystery and romance surrounding these verses, coupled with their own sweet cadence and deep poetic feeling, have aroused the greatest interest among scholars and literary men of the present century, until there is now quite a collection of sonnet literature, and two parties have been formed by the Herbertites and Southamptonites, who wage a fierce paper warfare.—*William Stanton, Stratford-on-Avon.*

THE HOUSEHOLD.

Your object is to send the family off to school and business with a good start and good breakfast, which gives them cheer and strength to face the day,—a capital better than money for people who have real work to do in the world. I have heard a girl of sixteen say: "Father isn't particular, and I get what's easiest for breakfast; bread and butter and tea, and a slice of ham, a little cold meat for lunch; and whatever happens for dinner, and he never says a word." And I have seen the father looking worn and uncomplaining, going from his comfortless breakfast and ill-kept house to his day's work, or the young clerk, her brother, going to the office to work indoors all day, shut from the fresh air and sunshine which feeds one, growing paler and thinner month after month without the support of good, warm relishing food which the girl was too careless to prepare or to see that the servant prepares.

I want to speak seriously about this matter of providing *good* food, as it is something on which our brains, morals, and tempers depend, as well as our bodily strength. Good food is not rich food, still less is it the "tolerable" fare which is just undercooked and flavorless enough to tax digestion more than it ought.

The really good food helps one to do the most work with least fatigue, to study with the brightest thought. It is the best of everything, cooked in the nicest possible way and with pleasant variety. It may be simple fare, but the potatoes will be the whitest and dryest "selected," as the marketmen say; the steak, whether sirloin or "chuck," will be freshly cut, bright and clean; the butter faultless, even if you go without it at dinner as the French do, for the sake of having the best, and the coffee, flour, and meal in your storeroom will be the

best of the kind. Then it will be as delicately cooked and neatly served as at the most expensive restaurant, if not better; for your ambition will be to have as many niceties as possible at home which are not known abroad.—*Mrs. S. D. Power, Anna Maria's Housekeeping.*

LETTERS OF A SISTER.

To her Brother, James Freeman Clarke.

NEWTON, Sept. 18, 1839.

My dear James,—I have not heard of your arrival, but suppose this letter will find you at Louisville, particularly if Mrs. Lewis carries it, and she cannot reach home before the end of the month.

William Channing* came to-day to see us. He declares that he never got any invitation to be at your wedding, which seems mysterious, considering that you and Anna both seemed to expect him. He seems in fine spirits, and few things please me so much as his being fixed at Cincinnati, and so happy and active there.

Abraham left us last Friday, and mother and Sam will go next Thursday, so that before the 1st of October I shall be left alone once more. I hope that Anna and yourself will write to me often through the winter, for letters must be a large part of my subsistence.

I have never yet told you anything about my Allstonian experiences. I hope one day to show you some fruits of that season, for I feel now as if I could paint the universe, having got hold of a most philosophical and clear method of going to work. I have hitherto wasted so much time in trying experiments that I am fully prepared to appreciate the value of a worthy plan. I might have wasted years in study and not have discovered what Mr. Allston has shown me in a few days. He has painted an entire landscape before my eyes and answered every question I chose to ask him with the utmost frankness. I was glad to hear him say that he never painted a picture that did not cost him his whole mind, for it justified my original impression that there is a whole world of thought belonging to each picture. In particular he said that the Eliot landscape cost him a world of study, far more than he meant it should when he began it.

He has just finished a new picture called the "Bride of Este," who is, as he says, the

* William Henry Channing.

lady to whom the little troubadour is singing. Thus he carries on a romance of his own throughout these pictures. In this Bride he has undertaken to represent the moment when the feelings are concentrated to one point, when the past and future are nothing and the present moment appears infinite as it is. In this high emprise he has, as I think, perfectly succeeded, and has given us a face of rare and refined beauty trembling with emotion.

I have tried to write down sundry notable things which Mr. Allston said while I was with him, but such a record is worth little compared with the remembrance of the living speech. Yet, when he spoke of Plato—of the value of beauty—of the Gothic ideal and other high and rarely mentioned subjects, I felt as if it ought to be preserved better than my pen or memory could preserve it.

Why does not Mr. Keats make some answer to Margaret's proposal to take Emma again under her tuition? Emma wants to leave Miss T. and to be with Margaret.

Margaret is going to hold in Boston a sort of conversation party weekly. She is to lead the conversation and manage it, and is to receive a fee from each person admitted. The subjects of talk will be such as relate to *belles-lettres*, and the object of engaging in this way is to get clear ideas on those subjects by talking them over and comparing opinions, etc.

Then Mr. Alcott will hold a similar conference on more sublime themes, such as the nature of the soul and such venturous inquiries as he chooses to set on foot. These with Mr. Emerson's lectures will provide a good quantity of mental food as well as spiritual for those who hunger and thirst therefor. I scarcely think I shall be willing to spare time for these intellectual coteries; but, if I can, I shall certainly go to Margaret's parties.

We are to have Mrs. Norton come here to live and provide for all our wants, so that I shall have all my time to myself for six months at least, and, if I do not paint some pictures in that time, shall reckon myself stupid in the extreme.

Don't you wish me to buy for you Goethe's "Correspondence with a Child"? It is said to be the most wonderfully exciting and suggesting book that has yet appeared. There will be another copy here for sale soon, and, if you would like to have it, I will buy it for you and read it before sending it to you. The price is six dollars, and it is in three volumes. I send you Jones Very's book.

THE AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

[Address everything relating to the Amusement Column to Mr. Henry A. Jenks, Canton Corner, Mass. Contributors are requested to write on one side of the paper only. Write name and address plainly (not necessarily for publication), and send the answers to the puzzles on a separate slip of paper.]

I.

CHANGED INITIALS.

Example: Change a fabric of fine thread to a contest in running. Answer,—I-ace, R-ace.

1. Change to name to a public building.
2. Change final to a point of the compass.
3. Change a slab of marble for flooring to a heap.
4. Change a Latin pronoun to in time past.
5. Change a carnivorous animal to an article of furniture.
6. Change metal in its mineral state to anger.
7. Change a weed to anxiety.
8. Change peculiar to increase.

When the changes have been rightly made and the words written one below another, the initial letters will spell the name of an early spring flower.

II.

SOME FAMOUS MEN.

1. H-N-Y -A-S-O-T- I- -G-E-L-W.
2. -A-E- R-S-E-L -O-E--.
3. W-L-I-M -E-R- H-R-I-O-.
4. -A-H-N-T-N -R-I-G.
5. J--N -A-C-C-.

III.

A SEA TRIP.

1. What is the sea that never tells?
2. The sea that seeks to read the future?
3. The sea that is always making mistakes?
4. The sea that looks forward to something?
5. The sea that is urgent?
6. A sea of money?

—Every Other Sunday.

IV.

SUGGESTIONS.

What famous persons do the following objects suggest?

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Hatchet. | 5. A horse (2) |
| 2. A rail fence. | 6. A griddle cake. |
| 3. A bridge. | 7. A spider's web (2) |
| 4. A kite. | 8. A fiddle. |

—Youth's Companion.

V.

CROSS-WORD ENIGMA.

In day, but not in fire.
 In record, but not in late.
 In street, but not in road.
 In yard, but not in store.
 In fur, but not in sin.
 In fun, but not in trio.
 In safe, but not in danger.
 My *whole* is a famous Frenchman.

Answers to the Puzzles in the March Number.

I. TRIPLE CROSS-WORD ENIGMA.—Marquette, Frontenac, Champlain.

II. CONUNDRUMS.—18. Yesterday. 19. Postman.

III. NUMERICAL PUZZLE: FAMOUS GREEKS.—1. Alcibiades. 2. Pericles. 3. Leonidas. 4. Pelopidas. 5. Epaminondas.

IV. HIDDEN CITIES.—1. Edinburgh. 2. Baltimore. 3. Sacramento. 4. Cleveland. 5. Raleigh.

V. PL.—

"By the rude bridge that arched the flood,
 Their flag to April's breeze unfurled;
 Here once the embattled farmers stood,
 And fired the shot heard round the world."

Canon Rowsley, on Saint Martin's, after describing good Saint Martin, added:—

"Some of you, my friends, followers of the gentle Christ, come to worship, nay, *come to the Supper of our Lord*, wearing 'egret' plumes or 'ospreys' in your hats and bonnets. Do you realize that this 'egret' plume grows on the bird's back only at the time of nesting, and that to obtain one such feather involves the cruel death not only of the beautiful white mother heron, but of the whole nestful of its nearly fledged offspring? What a price to pay for the pleasure of an egret plume! What a travesty of religion to be able to come into church decked with an egret feather and sing in the words of the Benedicite: '*O all ye fowls of the air, bless ye the Lord!*' praise him and magnify him forever! *What a mockery to kneel at Holy Communion*, take the soldier's oath of allegiance unto the Lord, that gentle Lord of all compassion and mercy, that Lord who said '*Consider the fowls of the air!*' who told us that not a sparrow falls to the earth unregarded by their heavenly Father!"

If there were no birds, man could not live on the earth, and birds are decreasing in this country.

"Sweet mercy is nobility's true badge."
 —Shakespeare.

The friends of birds will rejoice to know that, at present, the law in this State forbids the possession of any portion of any bird protected by the laws of Massachusetts. A card has been printed by the Audubon Society, containing this sentence:—

"These laws are especially directed to checking the destruction of birds for millinery purposes." Ignorance of the law, or statements that such feathers (e.g., "aigrettes," "ospreys") are manufactured, excuses no one. You can best obey the law by refraining completely from the use or possession of small birds, terns, gulls, grebes, herons, (including "aigrettes," "ospreys"), certain owls and hawks, either entire or in parts.

Two milliners in Boston have recently been arrested and fined for violating these laws, and those who wear the plumage or portions of the bodies of these birds are liable to the same penalty.

CRUEL FATE OF THE EGRETS.

Florida is rapidly losing its flocks of herons. The white egret is being slaughtered into extinction for the sake of the beautiful white feathers on its back, which, when plucked and placed on a flinty hearted woman's hat, become an aigrette.

The scale on which the massacre of these beautiful birds is being carried on is almost incredible. An idea of it may be gained from the fact that one egret will furnish only one-sixth of an ounce of plumage feathers, and yet at a public sale in London less than a year ago more than 11,000 ounces of osprey plumes were offered for sale.

The most lamentable feature of the slaughter of the beautiful and innocent birds is that the feathers grow at the time when the egrets are nestling and breeding. The best plumes are taken from the upward tuft at the back, which is developed at the breeding season, though feathers are, of course, taken also from the wing and the breast. They are common to both sexes, and it is impossible to distinguish between the male and the female. An egret is shot, the few coveted feathers are torn from its back, its body is left to rot on the ground and the young ones perish of starvation.

Jesus brought life and immortality out into the light, and the shadows began to flee away.

No sane person in good health longs to die. Why, then, do we sing in hymns what we should never think of saying in conversation?

THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE.

OBJECTS.

1. To cheer and comfort the lonely and discouraged—not only invalids, but all who need cheer and comfort—by the interchange of letters and by gifts of books and periodicals.

2. To supply in some measure to young people in remote places the lack of schools by gifts of school-books, letters, and, for those who desire it, correspondence classes on history, the natural sciences, and other interesting branches of study. If any desire to join such classes, they may send their names to our secretary.

3. Also to supply, to some extent, the lack of a church. One good sermon or sermon extract is printed in each number of the paper. These sermons are never doctrinal, but practical, and intended to cheer and comfort the sorrowful and aid in giving a vital religion without regard to sect or creed.

Any minister (of any sect) who receives this paper is invited to write to our headquarters (see address on this page) and give names and addresses of those who may be cheered and helped by becoming our correspondents.

No *theology* is disseminated in our paper. All the religious matter is intended merely to strengthen, cheer, and comfort those in need of such practical help.

THE ATTENTION OF ALL READERS OF "THE CHEERFUL LETTER" IS CALLED TO THE FOLLOWING NOTICE:—

It is contrary to the rules of the Cheerful Letter Exchange to allow any one to make use of our paper by addressing letters, asking for money, clothing, or other articles, to those whose names are printed in the paper. This prohibition includes requests to borrow money and the offering of articles for sale. The name of any person who infringes this rule will be dropped from our list; and any one who received a request of this description is desired by our Executive Committee to return no answer, but to enclose the letter at once to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 80 Goffe St., Quincy, Mass.

Resurrection is uprising. The resurrection from the dead self with its lifeless cares may take place every morning.

It is possible to believe in the eternal life with such energy of conviction that all questions concerning the mode of it will drop out of the mind.

IMPORTANT NOTICES.

Headquarters of the Cheerful Letter Exchange are at 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. The secretary, Mrs. L. B. Porter, may be found there on Mondays, Thursdays, and Fridays.

The April meeting of the Cheerful Letter Exchange will be held at 25¹/₂ Beacon Street, Boston, Mass., on Friday, April 3d, at 10.30 A.M.

HEREAFTER, ADDRESS ALL COMMUNICATIONS, INTENDED FOR THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE, "CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE, 25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON, MASS." THIS INCLUDES SUBSCRIPTIONS, CHANGES OF ADDRESS, REQUESTS FOR DISCONTINUANCE, BEGGING LETTERS RECEIVED BY MEMBERS OR BRANCHES.

The Cheerful Letter Exchange is developing Home Study work for the benefit of those without school facilities.

Arrangements will be made for lessons by correspondence in any school subject for those who are unable to leave their homes or who are far from centres of education.

Will those who would like to receive such instruction please send requests to Mrs. L. B. Porter, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

The Editor asks POSTMASTERS who send notices of changes of address not to send these notices to the Editor, but to the Secretary, at 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

Send requests for books and letters of thanks to the Book Club Secretary.

Hereafter, subscriptions to *The Cheerful Letter* should be sent to the secretary, Mrs. L. B. Porter, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. Make checks payable to Lily Blunt Porter.

Chairman, Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 80 Goffe Street, Quincy, Mass.

Secretary, Mrs. Lily Blunt Porter, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

Editor of "The Cheerful Letter," Miss L. Freeman Clarke, 91 Mt. Vernon Street, Boston, Mass.